

Angels, the Final Age and 1-2Corinthians in Light Of The Dead Sea Scrolls

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1. Introduction

The Letters of Paul the apostle attest to an expectation of the final age which has been characterised by many exegetes in terms of a tension between the inauguration of a new age by Jesus' resurrection and the Parousia. Pauline eschatology has been the subject of extensive debate.¹ A relatively neglected issue concerns the question whether and in which way angels and the relation between human and heavenly beings play a part in Paul's eschatologically oriented perspective. Comparative studies on angels in early Judaism and emerging Christianity usually focus on other parts of the New Testament. For instance, the Loren T. Stuckenbruck's monograph on 'Angel Veneration and Christology' is oriented towards the Apocalypse of John, while the monograph by Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis turns to 'Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology'.² James D.G. Dunn in fact observes a 'relative detachment' on the part of Paul on the issue of heavenly powers, and claims that, borrowing a term from Rudolph Bultmann, Paul "engaged in his own demythologization at this point".³ Nevertheless, the variety of references to ἄγγελοι in Paul's Letters (1Cor 4:9, 6:3, 11:10, 13:1; 2 Cor 11:14, 12:7; Gal 1:8, 3:19, 4:14; Rom 8:38-39) merits further attention with regard to tacit assumptions in Paul's communication with his readers. This is exactly due to the fact that Paul does not provide extensive description or definition of heavenly powers, while yet mentioning them in varying settings.

Paul's references to angels are ambiguous. Angels can serve as part of a rhetorical *a minori ad maius* statement in Galatians 1:8 that not even

1 Dunn, *Theology* 461-498, gives a survey of discussion about 'the eschatological tension' in Paul's theology.

2 Stuckenbruck, *Angel*; Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*.

3 Dunn, *Theology* 104-110, 110.

‘an angel from heaven’, ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ can invalidate the gospel as preached by the apostle to the Galatians. In the same letter, Paul yet reminds the Galatian readers about their initial reception of his gospel that they received him ‘as an angel of God’, ὡς ἄγγελος θεοῦ (Gal 4:14). This figurative mention of an ‘angel of God’ could stand in a biblical tradition of figurative speech according to which the angel of God stands for wisdom of God and the discernment of good and evil.⁴ In Romans 8:38-39, Paul mentions angels and principalities, οὔτε ἄγγελοι οὔτε ἀρχαί,⁵ as part of the creation to make the rhetorical point that nothing separates believers from ‘the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord’. More substantial references to angels occur in the Corinthian correspondence at both figurative and literal levels of meaning, and it is in these Letters that Paul is most outspoken about the end of the ages in terms of resurrection (1Cor 15; 2 Cor 5:1-10). For this reason this article will focus on the Corinthian correspondence.

The theocentric imagery of angels noted above as well as references to Satan and his angels in 2 Cor 11:14 and 12:7 suggest a biblical and early Jewish matrix for Pauline thought about angels. It may therefore be expected that biblical and early Jewish tradition provide evidence which may illuminate Pauline passages about angels in individual cases. Much work has been done in the study of early Jewish angelology as a subject in its own right⁶ and as a comparative context for New Testament, with occasional attention for Pauline and Deutero-Pauline evidence.⁷ Recently published Qumran texts, like *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q400-407; cf. MasShirShabb),⁸ *4QInstruction* (4Q415-418c),⁹ and also fragments of *4QMessianic Apocalypse*¹⁰ (4Q521 7+5 II) are

4 Cf. 2Samuel 14:17.20, 19:27.

5 See Carr, *Angels*. One variant reading of Romans 8:38 has οὔτε ἀρχαί οὔτε ἐξουσίαι, the combination of terms further occurs in Colossians and Ephesians.

6 See Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*; Davidson, *Angels*. On divine messenger terminology in the Old Testament, see Hirth, Göttes; Röttger, *Mal’ak Jahweh*. The subject of angels in rabbinic literature is covered in the study by Schäfer, *Rivalität*. See also the contribution of B. Rebiger in the present volume.

7 Stuckenbruck, *Angel*, pays further attention to Gal 4:3.8-9.19-20 (104-111), Colossians 2:18 (111-119), and Hebrews (119-139) as examples of polemical New Testament texts, but does not consider 1-2Corinthians in detail; Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, pays minor comparative attention to Pauline evidence about angels.

8 Official publication of 4Q400-407 (4QShirShabba-h) and Mas1k (*Massada Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*) by Newsom, *Qumran Cave 4*, 173-401. Note that the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* are also associated with ‘Angelic liturgy’: Charlesworth / Newsom, *Dead Sea*.

9 *Editio princeps*: Strugnell / Harrington, *Qumran*. For correction and different reconstruction see Tigchelaar, *Learning*. On the evidence about angels, see recently Wold, *Women* 124-182.

10 *Editio princeps*: Puech, *Qumrân* 1-38.

among new evidence which contributes to our picture of Palestinian Jewish thought about angels. This and other Qumran evidence motivates the separate attention for the Dead Sea Scrolls as Jewish background in this article.

The search to advance the understanding of Pauline angelic imagery in light of biblical and early Jewish tradition ties in with the apostle's Jewish background, the influence of Christian Jews like Apollos and Cephas as missionaries in Corinth, and the presupposition of the Corinthian readers' knowledge of biblical tradition to some extent.¹¹ This is not to deny possible connections with conceptions of cosmology and transcendent powers in Graeco-Roman culture, but it seems unlikely that Paul had a pagan concept in mind when speaking about angels.¹² This becomes clear from Paul's unequivocal denouncement of idolatry (1Cor 10:14-22) and from his deprecating designation of a pagan temple as εἰδωλεῖον (1Cor 8:10).

The below discussion will first provide a survey of angels in biblical and early Jewish tradition with separate attention for the Dead Sea Scrolls. We will then review the Pauline passages in 1-2Corinthians in light of possible connections with early Jewish tradition. The article will conclude with an evaluation of the question which part angels play in Paul's theology and situate Paul's thought among other angelic traditions in emerging Christianity.

2. Angels in Biblical and Early Jewish Tradition

This survey of biblical and early Jewish tradition is not intended to be comprehensive, but to give an impression of the diversified types of biblical and early Jewish texts and settings in which the supernatural realm of angels is inscribed. The described or implied relation of angels as transcendent powers to human reality is a main point of comparative interest.

2.1 The Pentateuch

The biblical narrative of the flood (Genesis 6:5-8:22) is preceded by an enigmatic passage about the union between the 'sons of God',

11 See on this Hogeterp, Paul 117-118, 197-235. 306-309.

12 For examples of usage of ἄγγελοι as transcendent powers in pagan religion, see BDAG 8.

בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים, and women (Gen 6:1-4). The Hebrew term is usually taken to stand for angels,¹³ and one manuscript of the Septuagint (Codex Alexandrinus) in fact translates this term in Gen 6:2 as ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ. The place which this passage has just before the divine realization of great wickedness on earth (Gen 6:5) may imply an ambivalent if not negative perception of these angelic beings and the consequences of their actions; an impression confirmed by a later interpretive tradition attested in the work of Flavius Josephus and apocalyptic tradition.¹⁴

Angelic activity on earth is represented as stemming from divine involvement in several Genesis stories. An angel of the Lord visits Hagar in the wilderness (Gen 16:7-14, 21:17), intervenes against the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:11.15), is sent before Isaac for the promise of prosperity (Gen 24:7.40), and is mentioned by Jacob as his redeemer from all evil (Gen 48:16). The visit of three men to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre and their role in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18-19) can be associated with theophany and angelic activity, as the flow of the text (Gen 18:22, 19:1) indicates, and interpretive traditions in Josephus and Qumran evidence further confirm this.¹⁵ Angels of God further appear in Jacob's dreams (Gen 28:10-17, 31:11-13) and they are met by Jacob (Gen 32:1).¹⁶ In some cases, such as Genesis 16:7-14, the angelic appearance is in fact an expression of theophany.¹⁷

An angelic appearance marks the theophany to Moses (Exod 3:2) and the exodus of the people of Israel to the promised land is accompanied by an angel of God who goes before them (Exod 14:19, 23:20.23; 32:34, 33:2; Num 20:16). As part of Moses' blessing of Israel (Deut 33:1-

13 See e.g. Newsom, *Angels* 248-253 at 248 who stresses the rich Hebrew vocabulary for angels: מַלְאָכִים, צְבָאוֹת, מְשֻׁרָּתִים, קְדָשִׁים, אֱלֹהִים, בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים. With regard to cases in which אֱלֹהִים designates angelic beings, it has been noted that the Septuagint rendering ἄγγελοι could also be viewed as a Jewish response to pagan polytheism; see Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien* 2-3. – Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts* 4 n. 16 mentions a number of examples in which the LXX renders אֱלֹהִים as ἄγγελοι (LXX Psalm 8:5, 97:7, 138:1; Isa 9:5; Dan 2:11 OG).

14 On apocalyptic tradition, see section 2.4 below. In his *Biblical Antiquities* (Ant. 1.73), Flavius Josephus attributes to the sons begotten through the union between the 'angels of God' and women that they were "overbearing and disdainful of every virtue, such confidence had they in their strength" (translation from Thackeray, *Josephus* 35), while further comparing them to Greek mythology about the giants.

15 Josephus, Ant. 1.196 (τρεῖς ἄγγελοι); 4Q180 (4Q*Ages of Creation* A) 2-4 II 3-4 [שְׁלוֹשָׁה מַלְאָכִים אֲשֶׁר יִרְאֶנּוּ אֶל אַבְרָהָם בְּאֵלוֹנֵי מְמֶרָה מִלְאָכִים הַמָּה].

16 The passage about Jacob's wrestling with a divine being, after which Jacob receives the name 'Israel' (Gen 32:22-32) is further interpreted as Jacob's wrestling with an angel in 'inner-biblical exegesis' (MT Hos 12:4, LXX Hos 12:5) and later interpretive tradition (Josephus, Ant. 1.331-334).

17 For a survey of intersections and distinction between theophany and angelophany, see Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien* 56-60.

29), Deuteronomy 33:2 refers to God who revealed himself from Sinai as having come “from the ten thousands of holy ones with flaming fire at his right hand” (RSV).

2.2 Prophetic Literature¹⁸

Angels do not appear to play a role of major significance in the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah.¹⁹ Isaiah 6 mentions the so-called ‘seraphim’ in the story about Isaiah’s call and the divine punishment of the ‘host of heaven’ (Isa 24:21) as well as of Leviathan (Isa 27:1) are part of the ‘Isaiah apocalypse’ (Isa 24-27). Jeremiah 23:18-22 denounces false prophecy by rhetorically questioning whether any of those so-called prophets has stood in ‘the council of the Lord’ (Jer 23:18.22). In most instances the revelation of words of the Lord to Isaiah and Jeremiah is expressed in a more direct way without the intermediation of angelic figures. The throne chariot vision in Ezekiel 1:4-28a gives visionary expression to the glory of the Lord surrounded by supernatural winged creatures whose connection with angelic ‘Cherubim’ has been pointed out in previous scholarship.²⁰

In the Minor Prophets, the term ‘angel/messenger of the Lord’ (מַלְאָךְ / ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου) can be a designation for the prophet himself (Hag 1:13) as well as a mediating figure in visions of the Lord revealed to the prophet (Zech 1:8-17; cf. Zech 4:1-14, 5:5-11, 6:1-8). Malachi 2:7 likens the role of a priest to that of ‘the messenger of the Lord of hosts’; an example which indicates that the terminology leaves room for both human and heavenly functions.²¹ The relation of the (high)priesthood to the heavenly, in particular angelic realm, is visualised in Zechariah 3:1-10, which evokes a heavenly court scene in which הַשֹּׁטָן / ὁ διάβολος as adversary accuses the high priest, while the angel of the Lord acquits him.

18 Daniel, which was counted among the Prophets in first-century CE Jewish and Christian tradition (Matt 24:15; 4Q174 1 II, 3, 24, 5, l. 3), will be discussed in section 2.4 about apocalyptic tradition.

19 Cf. the survey in Mach, Entwicklungsstadien 60-63.

20 Mach, Entwicklungsstadien 36 refers to connections between Ezek 1, 3 and 10. Cf. Exod 25:10-22, 1Kgs 6:23-28.

21 Fletcher-Louis, Luke-Acts 110-139 at 118, counts Mal 2:7 among Jewish angelomorphic traditions about kings, priests and prophets; a trajectory followed in post-biblical Jewish texts according to Fletcher-Louis.

2.3 Other Biblical Writings

Judg recounts the appearance of the angel of the Lord to Gideon (Judg 6:11-24), to the wife of Manoah to announce the birth of Samson (Judg 13:3-7), and to Manoah (Judg 13:11-21). The human and angelic realms are described as analogous to each other in Judg 13:6, which observes about the 'the appearance of the man of God' (HT **אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים** LXX: ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ) that it was 'like the appearance of the angel of God', **כַּמְרֹאֶה מַלְאֲכֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** (MT) / ὡς εἶδος ἀγγέλου θεοῦ (LXX).

The biblical historiography of the time from Samuel to the last descendants of the house of David at the time of the Babylonian exile, as recounted in 1-2Samuel, 1-2Kings and 1-2Chronicles, includes some evidence about angels. 2Samuel 14:17.20 and 19:27 attests to homage to king David in figurative speech which likens him to an angel of God. 1Kings 19:1-18 narrates a divine revelation to Elijah on Mount Horeb through the appearance of the angel of the Lord (1Kgs 19:7).²² The wreaking of destruction is also attributed to an angel of the Lord (2Sam 24:15-16 / 1Chron 21:12-16.27).

Angelic functions in the Psalter vary between deliverance of those who fear the Lord (Pss 34:7, 91:11), vengeance against adversaries (Pss 35:5-6, 78:49), and heavenly worship of God (LXX Ps 96:7, 137:1; Pss 103:20, 148:1-2).

2.4 Apocalyptic Tradition

Angels make an integral part of apocalyptic tradition,²³ since they serve as mediating and even interpreting figures in heavenly revelations and dream visions (e.g. *1En* 1:2, 108:5; LXX Dan 2:11). The proverbial 'angelus interpretes' is further an important part of many later apocalyptic texts (e.g. *4 Ezra* 4:1, 5:31, 7:1, 10:29; *Asc. Isa.*; *Visio Pauli*).

It is in early Jewish apocalyptic tradition, as represented by *1En* and Daniel, that the eschatological role of angels comes into view. In the otherworldly journey of Enoch, described in *1En* 20-36, Enoch successively asks the seven archangels, named in *1En* 20, questions about the places he sees. These places turn out to be related to the eschatological fate of the dead (*1En* 22:1-14, 24-32) as well as the punishment of disobedient stars (*1En* 21:1-5) and imprisonment of the fallen angels (*1En*

22 Note that verses from 1Kgs 19 are cited by Paul in Romans 11:2-4, albeit in terms of theophany.

23 Cf. Collins, *Imagination* 55-59, on Enoch's otherworldly journey guided by angels in *1En* 17, 21-27, and 104-107, on angels as 'the holy ones of the Most High' in Daniel.

21:7-10). Dan 12:1-3, which envisages the final age in terms of tribulation and resurrection, mentions the role of the archangelic figure Michael²⁴ in leading the people at the time of tribulation (Dan 12:1).

2.5 Sapiential Tradition

Angels as transcendent powers do not seem to play a clearly discernible role in the biblical wisdom books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, but they do figure in Job and the book of Tobit.²⁵ A minor reference to angels further occurs in the Wisdom of Solomon 16:20, which calls manna 'food of angels' in a comparable manner as Psalm 78:25 does.²⁶

The biblical narrative of the sufferings of Job is introduced by heavenly court scenes in which Satan discusses with God about Job (Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7, a'). Part of the otherworldly setting of Job is the mention of angelic figures, called, בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים 'sons of God', in MT Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; a Hebrew term which is consistently translated in the Septuagint as οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ. In Job 5:1, one of the friends of Job (Job 2:11, 4:1) asks him rhetorical question to which of the 'holy ones' (קְדוֹשִׁים in MT Job 5:1 / ἄγγελοι ἄγιοι in LXX Job 5:1) he will turn. Job 33:22-28 mentions the mediatory role of an angel before God to deliver a human being from death.²⁷ Job represents a sapiential tradition of profound reflection about theodicy and, as part of this, the question of angelic functions in face of human suffering. Yet the angelic praise of God's creation (Job 38:7) is presupposed in divine discourse in the book of Job.

The narrative of Tobit gives expression to the attendance of the angel Rafael to Tobit's son Tobias on his journey as a sign of God's providence (Tob 5:16.21, 6, 8:2-3, 11-12). The book of Tobit attributes praise of God and works of piety to angelic instruction (Tob 12:6-10) and the human recognition of great and wonderful works of God through the appearance of the angel of the Lord (Tob 12:22).

24 On Michael as one of the seven archangels, see *1En* 20:1-8 at v.5: "Michael, one of the holy angels, who has been put in charge of the good ones of the people" (translation from Nickelsburg /VanderKam, *Enoch* 40. About the influence of *1En* on Daniel 7-12, see e.g. Collins, *Imagination* 104-115.

25 In including Tobit here, I follow the characterization of Tobit by Kaiser, *Old Testament Apocrypha* 31 as "a wisdom moral tale with novelistic features".

26 With regard to the biblical tradition about manna as food for the people in the wilderness, Paul speaks of 'spiritual food', πνευματικὸν βρῶμα, in 1Cor 10:3.

27 HT Job 33:23 בְּלֹא אֱלֹהִים מִן אֱלֹהִים – LXX Job 33:23 οἱ ἄγγελοι θανατηφόροι.

2.6 Historical Works

Apocryphal and early Jewish historical works comprise references to angels in contexts of political discussion and warfare. It is an intriguing fact that one and the same biblical example of an angel of God who struck down the Assyrians (2Kgs 19:35 / Isa 37:36) occurs in discourses with opposite political intentions: one of Maccabean hope of military victory (1Macc 7:41; 2Macc 15:22-27) and the other of Flavius Josephus to dissuade from war against Rome (*J.W.* 5.388). Josephus, writing from the hindsight perspective of decades after the Roman victory which concluded the Jewish war against Rome (66-70 CE), has Agrippa call God's holy angels and Jerusalem to witness that war against Rome will lead to ruin and defeat (*J.W.* 2.401). Josephus further points to visions of heavenly chariots and battle arrays which were to be explained as signs of doom rather than victory (*J.W.* 6.298).

Soteriological and imminent expectations which envisage an active role of angels are part of the earlier Maccabean literature. 2Macc 2:21 mentions appearances from heaven to 'those who strove zealously on behalf of Judaism' (RSV), while 2Macc 11:6 describes an entreaty to God to send a 'good angel to save Israel'. 3 Macc 6:18 likewise underlines the delivery of the Maccabean forces in face of the enemies through the descendance of angel. In addition to these historical works, the Qumran *War Scroll* also attests to the idea that angels would join the armies of Israel (1QM VII 6, XII 8) against the 'Kittim', i.e., the Romans.²⁸ Even the rhetorical reference to the sending of twelve legions of angels in Matthew 26:53 may be an indirect echo of this horizon of expectations.²⁹

2.7 The Dead Sea Scrolls

Much earlier discussion of angels in Qumran literature has focused on sectarian texts which envisage present communion and inheritance of those whom God has chosen with the 'sons of heaven', i.e., the angels (1QS XI 7-9) and of the individual protagonist in the so-called Teacher Hymns with them (1QH^a X 13, XI 19-23).³⁰ To this longer-known sectarian evidence, E.G. Chazon recently added the discussion of a number

28 Schürer, *History* 241 n. 30: "Today there is quasi-unanimity in identifying the victorious Kittim of Qumran literature with the Romans".

29 Cf. Hagner, *Matthew* 789-790. Paul does not give outright expression to such a horizon of expectation about angelic participation in eschatological war. 1Thess 4:16 and 1Cor 15:24-28 appear to make residual reference to an eschatological scenario of destruction of every rule of enemies, with an angelic part in this scenario (1Thess 4:16), but Paul transposes the apocalyptic imagery to the subject of resurrection.

30 See e.g. Kuhn, *Enderwartung* 66-73; Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien* 209-216.

of liturgical texts, 4Q503 (*Daily Prayers*), *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 4QBerakhot, of which only the latter text is clearly rooted in the sectarian Qumran community as its community terminology indicates.³¹

The *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* include mention of psalms of praise, thanksgiving, and exultation uttered by the tongues of seven 'chief princes' to exalt God (Mas1k II // 4Q403 1 I 1-29 // 4Q404 2+3AB // 4Q405 3 II). The place of seven chief princes in this angelic liturgy could echo the apocalyptic tradition of 1En 20 which distinguishes seven archangels.³² The *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* provide a very diversified vocabulary to designate heavenly angels, such as, for instance, 'exalted angels', מלֹאכֵי רוֹם; 'spirits of the holy of holies', רִחוּי קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשִׁים; 'living divinities', אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים; and 'holy ones', קְדוּשִׁים.³³

The longer-known sectarian Qumran texts attest to a dualism between angels of God and of Satan and between the realms which these respective angels stand for. The 'Treatise of the Two Spirits' (1QS III 13 – IV 26) juxtaposes the dominion of the 'prince of lights', שֵׁר אֱוֵרִים, over the sons of righteousness to the dominion of the 'angel of darkness', מֹלֵךְ חוֹשֶׁךְ, over the sons of evil as well as over corruption of the sons of righteousness (1QS III 20-22). The Damascus Document expresses the view that only when one returns to the Law of Moses and keeps one's words (by observing it), then "the angel Mastema will turn aside from following him," יסור מלֹאךְ הַמַּשְׁטֵמָה מֵאַחֲרָיו (CD-A XVI 4-5 // 4QD^c 4 II 6-7).³⁴

The sapiential Qumran text 4QInstruction with apocalyptic elements³⁵ also comprises evidence about angels which has recently become the subject of intensive study by B.G. Wold.³⁶ Main examples in Wold's analysis are the 'formation (of humanity)' "according the image of the holy ones" (כְּתַבְנִית קְדוּשִׁים) in 4Q417 1 I 15-18,³⁷ as Wold translates it; a

31 Chazon, Communion 95-105. A short discussion of some preliminarily published fragments of the Qumran *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* was included in the survey of liturgical and cultic communion with angels by Mach, Entwicklungsstadien 229-235.

32 Chazon, Communion 101, refers to 'angelic chief princes' in this regard; cf. also Mach, Angels 25.

33 In this respect, Mach, Angels 25, deems the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* to be "a classical source for a fully developed angelology".

34 Text and translation from García Martínez / Tigchelaar, Dead Sea 564-565.

35 On the combination of wisdom and apocalypticism in a text like 4QInstruction, see recently Collins, Mysteries 287-305; Goff, Wisdom 68: "4QInstruction is the best example available of a wisdom text with an apocalyptic worldview".

36 Wold, Women 124-182.

37 Text reference according to DJD 34; this is 4Q417 2 I 15-18 in García Martínez / Tigchelaar, Dead Sea 858-859.

model of divine parenthood with reference to God and angels (אֱלֹהִים),³⁸ in 4Q416 2 III 15-18; and the references to angels as קְדוּשִׁים and אֱלֹהִים in 4Q418 fragment 81 lines 1-14.

4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521) 7+5 II 15 mentions angels, מַלְאָכִים, as part of a fragment which presents an eschatological vision about death as destiny for the 'accursed' (ll. 5, 13) and life as destiny for 'the dead of his people', for those who do good before the Lord (ll. 4, 6). The angels in this fragment (l. 15) appear to be associated with the heavens (l. 14).

3. The Pauline Evidence on Angels in 1-2 Corinthians Reconsidered

3.1 'A Spectacle to Angels and to Men', 1Corinthians 4:9

The first mention of angels in Paul's Corinthian correspondence occurs in 1Cor 4:9 in the context of Paul's response to Corinthian boasting of wisdom and honour (1Cor 4:8-13; cf. 1Cor 1:10-17.26-31). In 1Cor 4:9, Paul writes the following: "For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men" (RSV).

The imagery of this verse, θεάτρον τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις, has been compared with that of the public spectacle of an arena with gladiators,³⁹ but the mention of angels and Paul's association of his apostleship with a sentence to death could point in a different direction. While Paul has cited a passage from the book of Job (Job 5:13) among other biblical passages to denounce the 'wisdom of the world' (1Cor 3:19), it could also be that the imagery of 1Cor 4:9 alludes to the rhetorical question in Job 5:1 to whom of the angels a person in suffering and anguish can turn. Paul phrases his hardship in a provocative way as a 'spectacle'. A parallel to the language of hardship may further be noted in the Qumran *Hodayot*, which describes God's protection of the 'spring of life' and the mystery of 'powerful heroes and spirits of holiness' on the one hand and the protagonist's fate of mockery on the other (1QH^a XVI 11-15). The *Hodayot* also include mention of divine judgement against 'powerful heroes' and divine dispute (רִיבָכָה) with

38 'Angels' is the translation by Wold, Women 149-156; García Martínez / Tigchelaar, Dead Sea 2, 852-853 translate אֱלֹהִים as 'masters'.

39 Thiselton, Epistle 360.

the 'host of your holy ones', **צבא קדושים** (1QH^a XVIII 34-35).⁴⁰ The contrast between the contemporary reception of Paul's apostleship with contempt and ostracism, expressed in 1Cor 4:8-13, and the apostle's claim of sincerity as 'servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God' to be judged by the Lord only at the final age (1Cor 4:1-5) could not be clearer.

3.2 Judgement of Angels, 1Corinthians 6:2-3

In 1Corinthians 6:2-3 Paul confronts his readers with a double rhetorical question whether they do not know that the saints will judge the world and that 'we are to judge angels', ἀγγέλους κρινοῦμεν (1Cor 6:3 RSV), in order to divert them from taking part in trivial cases before unbelievers (1Cor 6:1-8). The eschatological judgement of angels is rhetorically juxtaposed to 'ordinary (everyday) matters', τὰ βιωτικά, in the same verse.

The notion of negative ambivalence about angels starts with Genesis 6:1-4 and is further elaborated in apocalyptic tradition (1En 21:7-10). The evidence of Qumran literature provides several examples of negative ambiguity about angels, of which one, God's dispute with the 'host of the holy ones' in 1QH^a XVIII 34-35 has just been mentioned. Another Qumran text, 4Q181 (4Q*Ages of Creation B*) 1 II 1-4, contrasts the delivery of "the sons of the he[avens] and the earth to a wicked community until its end" because of their evil and impurity to the glorious lot of "some from among the sons of the world .. (to be) considered with him in the com[munity of] [the di]vinities to be a holy congregation in the position of eternal life and in the lot with his holy ones".⁴¹ Although this text does not mention human judgement of angels, the contrast between fallen angels and exalted human beings seems to come close to this thought.

3.3 1Corinthians 11:10

In 1Cor 11:10, Paul insists on women wearing a veil during worship (cf. 1Cor 11:5.13) 'on account of the angels'. While it is not clear how this passage would relate to Paul's eschatological perspective, I will briefly mention some comparative interpretations. J.A. Fitzmyer interprets the

40 Text and translation: García Martínez / Tigchelaar, Dead Sea 2 180-181, 188-189.

41 Translation: García Martínez / Tigchelaar, Dead Sea 1 373.

passage in comparison with Qumran texts 1QM VII 4-6 and 1QSa II 3-11 which focus on bodily perfection in view of angelic accompaniment of and presence in the community.⁴² A more recent explanation by Dale C. Martin in apocalyptic terms with reference to Genesis 6 and 1En 7 in fact returns to an older interpretation.⁴³

3.4 'Tongues of angels', 1Corinthians 13:1

In 1Cor 13:1, Paul mentions 'tongues of men and of angels' at the beginning of an enumeration of spiritual talents to stress the point that they cannot have a meaning in themselves apart from faith, hope, and, most of all love. It has been a debated point what 'speaking in tongues', including those of angels, means,⁴⁴ and examples from early Christian literature, Graeco-Roman literature, and *Testament of Job* have been explored for comparative analysis by Dale C. Martin.⁴⁵ The Dead Sea Scrolls bring new evidence into this discussion, in that the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* attest to an angelic liturgy with references to hymns of praise uttered by the tongues of angelic 'chief princes' (Mas1k II // 4Q403 1 I 1-29 // 4Q404 2+3AB // 4Q405 3 II).

3.5 1Corinthians 15

Paul's digression on the resurrection in 1Corinthians 15 is focused on eschatological participation in Christ's resurrection. At the same time, Paul uses imagery related to celestial bodies (1Cor 15:40-44) and conceives of those who share in Christ's resurrection as 'those who are of heaven' (οἱ ἐπουράνιοι, 1Cor 15:48) in order to visualize the resurrection body. This may indirectly indicate the perceived angelic post-resurrection state⁴⁶ which is explicitly brought to the fore in the Synoptic tradition (Mark 12:25 par.). A comparison between the eschatological imagery in 1Cor 15:51-58 and 1Thess 4:13-18 implies a connection between the expected Parousia, the sounding of the trumpet, and the 'archan-

42 Fitzmyer, Feature 48-58; updated and reprinted in Fitzmyer, Background 187-204.

43 Martin, Body 242-245; Fitzmyer, Feature 196-197, refers to this in his view inadequate interpretation about 'protection against the fallen angels'.

44 Thiselton, Epistle 970-988, distinguishes various interpretations of 'species of tongues' in 1Cor 12:10c, among which "Tongues as Angelic Speech" (972-973), thereby referring to pseudepigraphical texts (T.Job 48:1-50:3; Jub 25:14; T.Judah 25:3; 1En 40, 71:11; 4 Macc 10:21).

45 Martin, Body 88-92.

46 Cf. Fletcher-Louis, Luke-Acts 12 n. 54.

gel's call' (1Thess 4:16), which precede the resurrection. Paul omits the latter archangelic image in 1Cor 15, because his focus is on the defence of the bodily resurrection of the deceased *per se*.

3.6 2Corinthians 11:14

In his polemic against false apostles (2Cor 11:3-6.12-15), Paul compares their disguise as apostles of Christ with a *a minori ad maius* statement with Satan who 'disguises himself as an angel of light'. This archetypal example is followed through by the pronouncement that 'their end will correspond to their deeds' (2Cor 11:15; RSV).

This polemical imagery appears to tie in with apocalyptic imagery, comparable to statements as in the Qumran Community Rule that the 'angel of darkness' is behind the corruption of the sons of righteousness and fall of the sons of light (1QS III 21-25)

3.7 2Corinthians 12:7

In 2Cor 12:1-10, where Paul speaks of heavenly revelations which are yet to be kept as 'things not to be told' (v.4), the apostle also mentions his affliction by an 'angel of Satan', ἄγγελος σατανᾶ (v.7) "to harass me, to keep me from being too elated" (RSV). Analogously, 1QH^a gives voice to personal affliction and disease by Belial's presence (1QH^a XV 2-5; cf. 1QH^a XVI 26-35).

4. Evaluation and Conclusion

The diversified literary settings of biblical and early Jewish tradition which we have surveyed indicate that the references to angels are inherent in biblical tradition and were part and parcel of Jewish world-views at Paul's time. To this one could also add gospel traditions on the part of emerging Christianity such as those which speak of angels as messengers who announce Jesus' birth (Matt 1:18-25; Luke 2:8-14) and Jesus' resurrection (Matt 28:2-3; Luke 24:23, ὁπτασία ἀγγέλων). On the other hand, Paul omits any angelic reference in his account of resurrection witnesses (1Cor 15:1-11). Where does this leave us with regard to the question of angels in Paul's theological worldview?

Paul's notion of revelation is directly related to faith in Christ, as several passages, such as Gal 1:12; 2Cor 3:14-18, and 12:8-9, may indi-

cate. In this respect, Paul's theology is distant from apocalyptic revelations with an 'angelus interpretes', but this is not to say that angels, both good and evil, did not play a part in Paul's worldview, as Romans 8:38-39, 1Cor 4:9, 11:10 and 2Cor 12:7, may indicate. 'Tongues of angels' (1Cor 13:1) may explained in a new way as angelic liturgy in light of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*.

The possibly angelomorphic connections with the visualized body of resurrection in 1Cor 15 and the envisaged judgement of angels in 1Cor 6:3 attest to the part an angelic state and angels have in Paul's eschatological perspective. The revelation of the question who are 'sons of God' in the creation yet awaits a definitive answer in Paul's thought (Rom 8:19), but the decisive point is whether one is led by the Spirit of God (Rom 8:14). The ambiguity about angels even in eschatological perspective can be compared with certain contemporary Jewish traditions, like *1En* 21:7-10, *1QH^a* XVIII 34-35 and *4Q181* 1 II 1-4, more than has been previously assumed.

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